

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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Exemption(s): B1

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P86 October 10, 1980

[Signature]

Dear Senator Goldwater:

Thank you for your letter of September 5 on behalf of your constituents, L concerning the human rights situation in Argentina, and in particular the plight of Jews in that country.

We remain deeply concerned over violations of basic human rights in Argentina. While the level of violations diminished last year, serious problems still remain.

The most fully documented compilation of disappearances contains the names of 6,500 persons whose whereabouts are unknown. The rate of disappearance has fallen off from several thousand in 1976 to approximately 40 for 1979. We have reports of eleven disappearances for this year. There are still reports of torture being used during the interrogation of new detainees. The right of option program, allowing prisoners to leave Argentina for other countries, has been slowed by Argentine bureaucratic procedures. Some improvements have been noted, however, in judicial autonomy and prison conditions, and the number of political prisoners held under state-of-siege provision has been reduced from 3,500 in 1978 to approximately 1,300 as of December 1979. The 1979 human rights report, submitted to the Congress in January 1980, contains a full and balanced account of the human rights situation.

Some of the victims of these violations have been Jewish and we have discussed with Argentine officials reports of anti-Semitism in that country. When Secretary Vance was in Argentina in November 1977 the question was discussed. Our Charge in Buenos Aires continues to stress to the Argentine Government our concern over these reports, as well as the cases of individuals. Officials in the Argentine Government have responded that they are strenuously opposed to anti-Semitism, that it is not Argentine Government policy, and that specific legislation has been passed which makes inciting racial hatred or violence a punishable offense.

The Honorable
Barry Goldwater,
United States Senate.

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As a result of Argentina's human rights record, it has been United States policy to oppose loans to Argentina in the multilateral banks which do not satisfy basic human needs criteria. The Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act proscribes our supplier role for equipment and training to the Argentine Armed Forces. Further actions toward Argentina will be consistent with this policy and legislation until there is a return to respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Sincerely,

GW

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure:

Correspondence returned.

DIRECTOR: ARA/ECAR:GWH:man:mas
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